**Literacy through the Arts**

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**Task 1**

1. *An activity that I currently use in the classroom.*

When covering any objective that involves singing, I take the opportunity to incorporate poetry discussions/writing responses. In many cases, a song is a poem set to music. It is a wonderful opportunity to discuss elements of the poetry (simile, metaphor, rhyming, and stanzas) and then how the composer chose to go about the music writing process to best convey the meaning of the poetry. Also, by having the students read the poetry and give a journal response, it supports building their text comprehension skills. Several poems that I have used this year are *Will there really be a “Morning”?* by Emily Dickenson, *How Beautiful is the Rain* by H.W. Longfellow, *The Stars,* and *If stars dropped out of heaven* by Christina Rossetti. Another activity that I currently use is to take a pre-existing tune, and have the students create a poem to fit the melody.

1. *An activity that I have implemented.*

For the 3rd grade composing objectives, I connected to our schools’ character education plan. Each class had a different topic (courage, kindness, integrity etc). We created a class rap (poetry) based on the topic. The students worked in learning groups to come up with ideas for the text. Through whole class instruction, we combined the ideas in a logical sequence, and made adjustments as necessary. Next we used Noteflight to set the lyrics to rhythms. In this part of the lesson, students had to draw on their knowledge of rhythmic values and rests. The challenge, as with any collaborative project, was to make sure that all of the students were contributing as equally as possible. I found that the students really enjoyed seeing (in print) and performing their final product. I think they liked their rap much more than if I had just taught them a rap about kindness etc. because it was their own product. The following link will show an example of the student work. Note: there are several rhythms which required teacher assistance for this grade level (syncopation and eighth rests, and single eighth notes).

<http://www.noteflight.com/scores/view/27bb54aa0b9298e8821b9cb2690f2b0b04be66dc>

3. *An activity that I would like to try, but need some support from other teachers*.

I would like to try incorporating various types of writing responses into specific lessons (i.e. critical, expressive, and persuasive) with the upper elementary levels. In order to do this most effectively, I will need to plan with the grade level which I am targeting. My goal would be to understand when they are teaching certain types of writing responses, and how they have presented the information to their students. I think it is important to be consistent, so that the students hear the same vocabulary/process. It could be very impactful for the student to use their writing strategies in the Music classroom to make those level 4 connections. As always, one of my concerns is time. I do not want to take away from the process of making music, when I seem to have so little time with my classes. Perhaps with the right planning, the music part of the lesson could be taught in my classroom, and the writing could continue in the regular classroom.